

A Further Note on the Type of *Platynerium alcicorne*

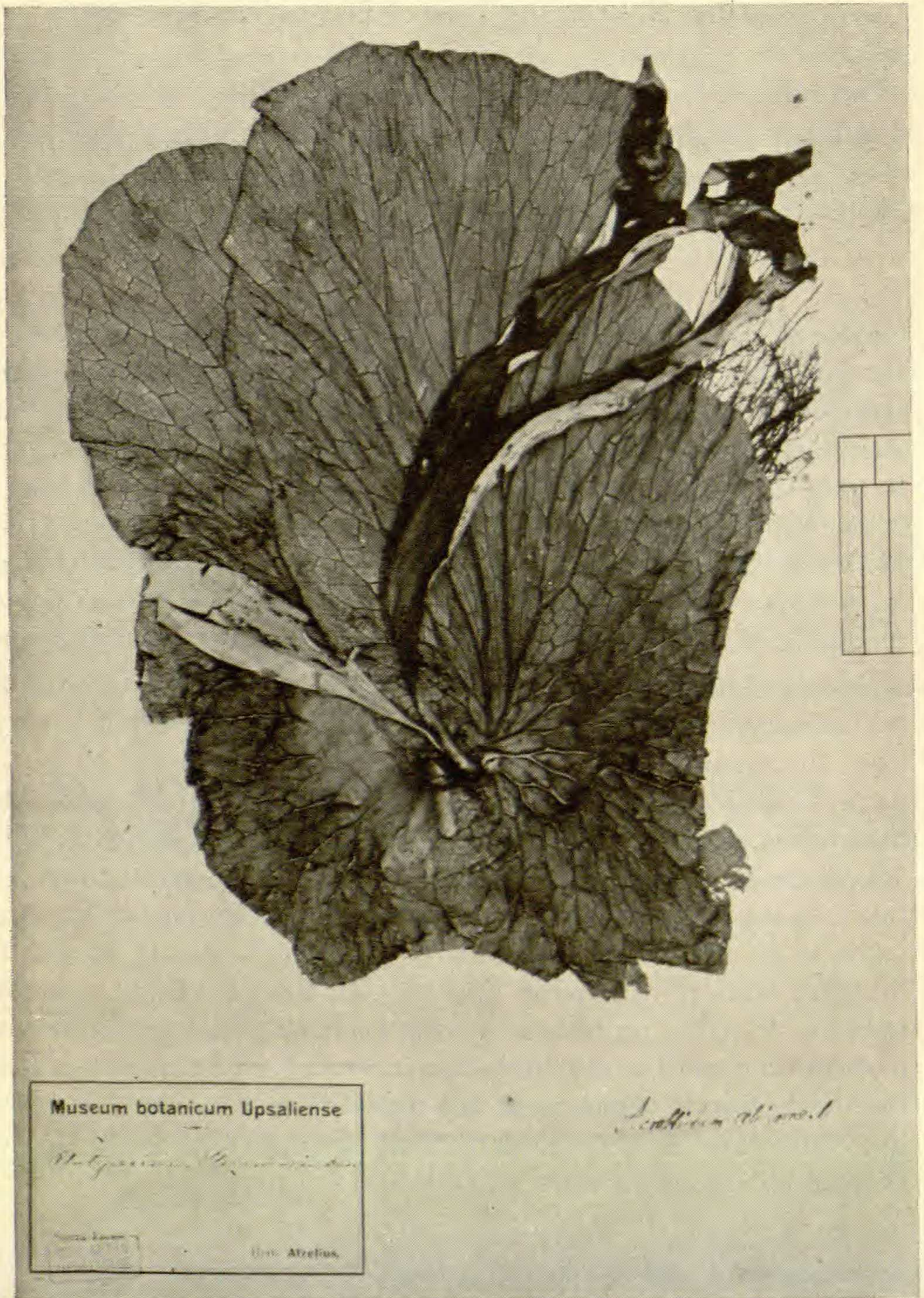
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Several years ago I published a paper, "The Nomenclature of a Madagascanian *Platynerium*" (Morton, 1964), in which I concluded that *Acrostichum alcicorne* Swartz (Syn. Fil. 12, 196. 1806) was an illegitimate change of name for *Acrostichum stemaria* Palisot (Fl. d'Oware et Bénin 3: t. 2. 1805), which was cited by Swartz as a synonym. This was an error on my part, occasioned by the fact that nowhere in the "Index Filicum" or in Willdenow or Desvaux is there any indication that Swartz had published his *Acrostichum alcicorne* prior to 1806. Mr. De Joncheere was the first to note that the name *A. alcicorne* Swartz was actually published in Schrader's "Journal für die Botanik," (1800, vol. 2, part 1, p. 11. 1802).<sup>1</sup> Since this 1802 publication is prior to the publication of *A. stemaria* Palisot it is clear that *A. alcicorne* Swartz was not a renaming of *A. stemaria*, and must therefore have a different type.

Swartz' 1802 paper "Genera et Species Filicum" is a sort of preliminary to his extensive "Synopsis Filicum" of 1806; it is very brief throughout, with short diagnoses and no citation of specimens, localities, or synonymy in general. In the case of *A. alcicorne* Swartz did cite "*Neuroplatyceron* Pluk. am. phyt. t. 429, f. 2." De Joncheere (1967) has argued that this Plukenet plate must be taken as the lectotype of *A. alcicorne*. However, it was not Swartz' habit to give names indiscriminately, if ever, to plants known to him only from pre-Linnaean drawings. In this case there is ample evidence that the protologue included not only this pre-Linnaean plate of Plukenet but also herbarium material, for Swartz described the fertile fronds, which were not depicted by Plukenet. In cases like this there is general agreement that species ought to be typified by specimens when possible and not by plates.

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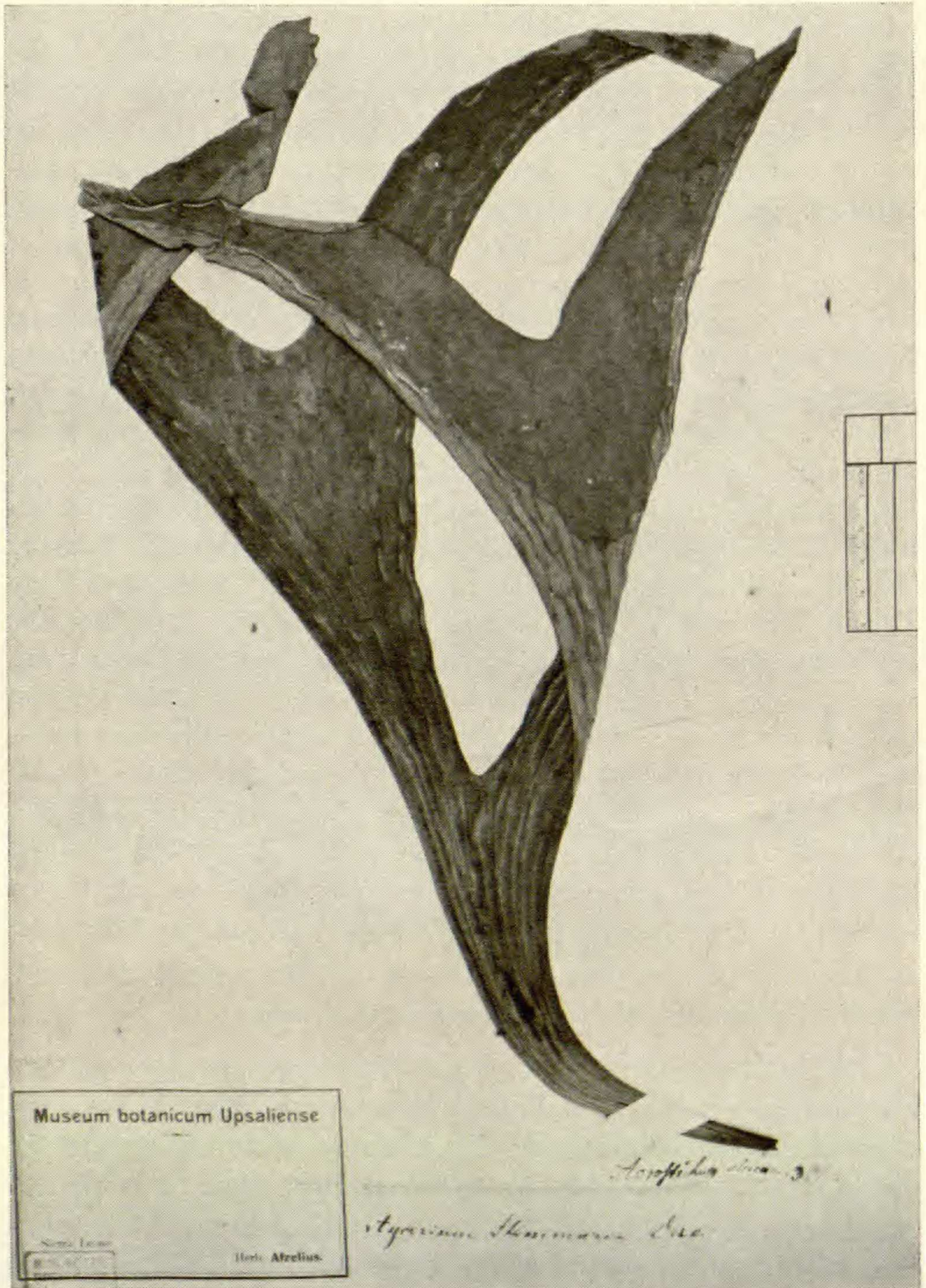
<sup>1</sup> The date "1801" on the title page has usually been accepted, but Stafleu in his "Taxonomic Literature," p. 432. 1967, has shown that this part was published in March, 1802.



LECTOTYPE OF ACROSTICHUM ALCICORNE, NEST LEAVES (UPS)

Dr. Schelpe searched the herbarium in Stockholm and could not find a specimen suitable for a lectotype, and De Joncheere stated that Schelpe also searched the herbarium in Uppsala without finding any specimens. At my request, Dr. John Wurdack recently found that there are indeed specimens in Uppsala, and through the courtesy of Dr. Rolf Santesson I now have these on loan. The specimens mentioned are in the original herbarium of Afzelius. They are fine specimens, including nest-leaves and fertile leaves, mounted on five sheets. They are indicated as being from Sierra Leone collected by Smeathman. In his 1806 publication Swartz mentions (p. 196) collections from Madagascar, *Commerson*; Oware, *Palisot*; Java, *Thunberg*; Guinea, *Afzelius*; and Nova Hollandia, *Née*," and on p. 12 cites "Sierra Leone" as one of the localities. In this 1806 publication Swartz had added as synonyms *A. stemaria* Palisot and *A. bifurcatum* Cav., and it is likely that the collections of Commerson and Palisot were cited from Palisot rather than actually seen by Swartz and that the Née collection was cited from Cavanilles. No specimen from Java collected by Thunberg has been found. The Afzelius collection from Sierra Leone mentioned above is the only herbarium specimen that can definitely be associated with a collection cited by Swartz. The name *alcicorne* is in the hand of Swartz. The five sheets in the Uppsala Herbarium are here designated as the lectotype of *A. alcicorne* Swartz. According to Schelpe, there is a specimen in Stockholm from Sierra Leone annotated by Wikström as *A. alcicorne*, and this is doubtless an isolectotype, although Afzelius is not definitely indicated as the source.

The specimens from Sierra Leone designated as lectotype are identical with *A. stemaria* Palisot from Oware [Nigeria], the type of which I have seen in Paris. The Plukenet plate was apparently drawn from a specimen now in the Sloane Herbarium in the British Museum, and according to De Joncheere came from the Comoro Islands and is identical with the plant described as *Acrostichum alcicorne* Willemet, now properly *Platycerium vassei* Poisson. The lectotype chosen above agrees well enough with Swartz'



LECTOTYPE OF ACROSTICHUM ALCICORNE, FERTILE FROND (UPS)

brief diagnosis, at least as well as that diagnosis agrees with *P. vassei*.

The present lectotypification is really best for stability as well as fully justified by the facts. Although *A. alcicorne* Swartz was prior to *A. stemaria* Palisot by three years, it was itself illegitimate, being a later homonym of *A. alcicorne* Willemet (1796), a species based on an entirely different type (Madagascar, *Stadtmann*). The next earliest name for the West African species is thus *A. stemaria* Palisot, and the correct name for it is *Platynerium stemaria* (Palisot) Desv., of which *P. alcicorne* (Swartz) Desv. is thus a taxonomic synonym. This is a fortunate turn of events, since *P. stemaria* is a name well known among horticulturists. Incidentally, Dr. Schelpe has suggested in a letter to Barbara Joe that the epithet "stemaria" ought to be corrected to "stemmaria," since the root is from "stemma," a garland, in Greek. This may well be, but the correction of the original spelling of a name ought not to be made for purely etymological reasons if there is no reason to suspect a purely typographical error; there are many poorly or wrongly formed names that must nevertheless be accepted.

The name *P. alcicorne* Desv. adopted by De Joncheere for the East African and Madagascanian species is thus incorrect, which is fortunate, since this epithet has been widely misapplied to three different species—the West African *P. stemaria*, and the East African and Madagascanian *P. vassei*, and the Australian *P. bifurcatum*.

Another species of *Platynerium* that may be mentioned here incidentally is *P. angolense* Welw. ex Baker in Hook & Bak. Syn. Fil. 425. 1868. The name appears as a comment under *P. aethiopicum* Hook. as follows: "Dr. Welwitsch has furnished us with a plant (*P. angolense* Welw. MSS.) which is most like this, but has a broad-cuneate fertile frond 9 in. br. at the top, without either forks or horns, and with a patch of fruit nearly as broad as the lamina." Dr. Schelpe has suggested in a letter to me that this name ought to be rejected by Art. 34 of the Code as not being accepted by the publishing author. In my opinion it is valid, as valid as a

large number of other names that are published rather casually in footnotes or text-notes. Baker did not either definitely accept it or reject it. He certainly did not conclude that it was exactly the same as *P. aethiopicum*, but gave its differences as he saw them. Since there is a name and a description, the name ought to be accepted as validly published. As it turns out, Welwitsch was quite right that it was different from *P. aethiopicum* Hooker, and *P. angolense* Welw. ex Baker is the correct name for the third African species of *Platynerium*, the other two being *Platynerium stemaria* and *P. vassei*; a taxonomic synonym of *P. angolense* is *P. elephantotis* Schweinf. and another probable synonym is *P. velutinum* C. Chr., as discussed by Barbara Joe (1964) in her useful review of *Platynerium*.

## LITERATURE CITED

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